

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 7042
By Brooks (Shelby)

A RESOLUTION recognizing Birtreal Benson of Memphis.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly frequently welcome the opportunity to recognize those civic and community leaders who have endeavored to inspire those around them; and

WHEREAS, Birtreal Benson is one such individual whose interactions with her neighbors have made a profound and positive impact on her community; and

WHEREAS, a teacher and principal in Mississippi prior to moving to Memphis in the late 1940s, Birtreal Benson decided upon moving to the Volunteer State to pursue her long-held dream; and

WHEREAS, in 1950, after completing cosmetology school, she opened Birtreal's Beauty and Barber Shop at 660 Williams Avenue in the historical South Memphis District; and

WHEREAS, for the next thirty years, Ms. Benson labored to remain on the cutting edge of the latest trends, and Birtreal's Beauty and Barber Shop, as a reflection of her passion, became a popular and well-known establishment; and

WHEREAS, during her years in cosmetology, Birtreal Benson was a leader in the field, serving as a member and Chapter President of the Tennessee Beauticians Association, and her philanthropic nature served as inspiration to many aspiring beauticians; and

WHEREAS, upon retiring from her trade, Ms. Benson passed the torch of her legacy on to her daughter, Magnolia Betts Johnson, who ran the business for sixteen years before handing the reins to Ms. Benson's niece, Eva; and

WHEREAS, committed to her community, Birtreal Benson has participated in many civic organizations, including serving as President of the 17, 18, and 1900 Foster Street Block Club, and has been active in the local political arena, serving on numerous campaigns; and

WHEREAS, a devout and thoughtful Christian, Ms. Benson has been an active member of the Monumental Baptist Church for nearly forty-six years; she has dedicated her time and energies as a Sunday School teacher, a member of the Missionary Society, a Deaconess, a member of the Mother Board, President of the November Club, and a hardworking and untiring fundraiser; and

WHEREAS, Birtreal Benson shared the love and companionship of her husband, the late J.C. Benson, the first black jury commissioner to serve Shelby County; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Benson is the finest example of a true Tennessean and community activist and, for nearly sixty years, has stood as a guiding light to the City of Memphis and its residents, and as such is deserving of proper recognition; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we recognize and honor Birtreal Benson for her years of civic leadership and community service.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.